

*Speech I  
liked at  
a recognition*

I heard a speaker recently who began his talk with an exposition on the topic of the "exclamation mark." The definition of this punctuation is: "a mark used after a word or sentence to express strong emotion or determination." Most grammar texts suggest that the exclamation mark should be used sparingly as overuse of it diminishes its impact and value. This speaker used the exclamation mark as a point around which we might question at what point in our lives would we apply the symbol. Would it be at birth? Graduation from high school or college? Marriage? As this gentleman is a Christian minister, he placed his exclamation point at the point in time when he made his commitment to Jesus, and suggested that we all do the same.

This evening, however, I wish to place the exclamation point upon the services of those faculty and staff members who we come to honor. This year, we have service recognitions for seven College employees. All of them have given dedicated service to Dodge City Community College for ten years or more. This service reflects a great deal more than just time in grade!

The word "service" derives from the Latin word "servire", meaning "to serve" or to act as a servant. All of the many definitions of this word "service" contain within them the term "to give." All of these people who we honor this evening have given a great deal of themselves to the benefit of Dodge City Community College, and more specifically, to the benefit of the many thousands of students who have come to learn.

In these times of heightened public demands for accountability from all educational institutions, I think it important that along with the accountability come a recognition that the faculty, counselors, coaches, plant personnel and, yes, even administrators, have for many years given more than they have taken in the context of educating the young people of tomorrow and re-educating the more mature to be productive citizens. They have given much in time, thoughtfulness, instruction, service and individual personal caring, at a level of pay which falls far short of being anywhere near the top of the income range for professional faculty and staff in our capitalist society.

We say, "put your money where your mouth is" in characterizing real commitment in our culture, yet in the context of education in general and Dodge City Community College in particular, we have not always followed our broad generalizations about the importance of education and training with what might be considered appropriate compensation for the commitment already made.

These servants who we honor here this evening, have taken to their obligations as teachers and support staff with diligence and dedication. They have endured the challenges of change and even disruption, with a willing spirit and the conviction that what it is that they do is important, not withstanding limited rewards. The graduates displayed in the Hall of Fame up here, are a living tribute to the faculty and staff of this College.

Our honorees have followed the advice of Benjamin Franklin when he said: "My rule, in which I have always found satisfaction, is never to turn aside in public affairs through views of private interest, but to go straight forward in doing what appears to me right at this time, leaving the consequences with Providence."

We all should take great pride in what Dodge City Community College has meant and will continue to mean to the many futures of residents of this area; young and old. But, we must also recognize in the words of Calvin Coolidge that "No person was ever honored for what he received. Honor has been the reward for what he gave."

Tonight, we truly honor those being recognized for what each has given in their respective areas of responsibility, and say "thank you" for a job well done.

"It is in loving--not in being loved--  
The heart is blest;  
It is in giving--not in seeking gifts--  
We find our quest."

Anonymous